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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 008381

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: KABILA'S "SELF-DEFENSE FORCES"

REF: A. KINSHASA '99

[1](#)B. 8034

CLASSIFIED BY POLOFF JONATHAN PRATT FOR REASONS 1.5 (B/D).

[1](#)1. (U) IN A MOVE THAT MAKES KINSHASA RESIDENTS NERVOUS, PRESIDENT KABILA HAS APPARENTLY DECIDED TO REVIVE THE "PEOPLE'S SELF-DEFENSE FORCES" (FAP), THE ARMED WING OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER COMMITTEES (CPP). KABILA FIRST AIRED THE IDEA OF ARMING NEIGHBORHOOD MILITIAS ONE YEAR AGO (REFTEL), BUT HAS NOT FOLLOWED UP ON HIS IDEA UNTIL NOW. HOWEVER, DURING A PUBLIC CEREMONY ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT NDJILI AIRPORT, VICE-GOVERNOR OF KINSHASA CHRISTOPHE MUZUNGU ANNOUNCED THAT PRESIDENT KABILA HAD TASKED HIM WITH REVIVING THE FAP. KABILA'S MILITARY ADVISOR, EDDY KAPEND, WAS ON HAND FOR THE CEREMONY. THE VICE-GOVERNOR TOLD THE CPP-ORGANIZED CROWD THAT PRESIDENT KABILA, IN REVIVING THE FAP, WAS DRAWING ON THE EXAMPLE OF VIETNAM "WHERE DURING THE WAR EVEN OLD PEOPLE HAD TO BEAR ARMS." FOLLOWING MUZUNGU'S SPEECH, THE LEADER OF NDJILI'S CPP REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAD SPENT TWO MONTHS TRAINING THE NDJILI FAP AND THAT "THEY WERE READY TO RECEIVE THEIR WEAPONS."

[1](#)2. (U) IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS SINCE THE CEREMONY AT NDJILI, MUZUNGU HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING ALL KINSHASA RESIDENTS TO REGISTER WITH THE FAP OUT OF "PATRIOTIC DUTY." AT CPP/FAP RALLY IN KINSHASA ON SUNDAY, MUZUNGU REPORTEDLY ANNOUNCED THAT 120,000 RECRUITS HAD ALREADY ENROLLED.

[1](#)3. (U) GIVEN THE TIMING OF THIS ANNOUNCEMENT (RIGHT ON THE HEELS OF THE SIX-MONTH MONUC EXTENSION), SOME OBSERVERS HAVE SPECULATED THAT KABILA'S REASON FOR ARMING THE FAP IS TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SECURITY FORCES IN KINSHASA PRIOR TO A LARGER UN DEPLOYMENT. VICE-GOVERNOR MUZUNGU DENIED THIS CLAIM IN A PUBLISHED INTERVIEW ON DECEMBER 18 WITH INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER "LA REFERENCE PLUS", EXPLAINING THAT THE PRIMARY REASON FOR ARMING THE FAP WOULD BE TO COUNTER THE RECENT INCREASE IN ATTACKS ON CIVILIANS BY SOLDIERS AND POLICE. IN RESPONSE TO THE WIDELY-HELD BELIEF THAT ARMING THE FAP WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF WORSENING RATHER THAN IMPROVING THE SECURITY SITUATION IN KINSHASA, MUZUNGU ASSURED "LA REFERENCE PLUS" READERS THAT THE FAP WOULD BE VERY WELL TRAINED AND HIGHLY ORGANIZED.

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: KABILA'S PLAN TO ARM THE FAP MAY FIZZLE THIS YEAR, JUST AS IT DID LAST YEAR. THERE ARE ALREADY NUMEROUS ARMED SERVICES IN KINSHASA, WITH SEVERAL TYPES OF POLICE AND MILITARY FORCES ROAMING THE STREETS. MOREOVER, IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THAT EVEN PRESIDENT KABILA WOULD GIVE WEAPONS TO PLAIN-CLOTHED CIVILIANS WITH AN AMBIGUOUS MANDATE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FAP CAN MOST LIKELY BE VIEWED AS A PR MOVE INTENDED TO DEMONSTRATE RESPONSIVENESS TO THE INCREASE IN ATTACKS BY SOLDIERS AGAINST CIVILIANS.

[1](#)5. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED: IF KABILA DOES GO THROUGH WITH PLANS TO ARM THE FAP, KINSHASA RESIDENTS WILL NO DOUBT WITNESS JURISDICTIONAL BATTLES BETWEEN THE NEWLY-ARMED CIVILIANS AND THE POLICE. AT THE END OF THE DAY, ANOTHER "SECURITY SERVICE" WON'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF NON-PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND THE DISASTROUS ECONOMIC SITUATION IN KINSHASA. END COMMENT.
SWING